

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims below replaces all prior versions of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended): A bending action member comprising:

a movable means in which ~~[[the]]~~ a front end side portion thereof is bendable;

~~a drive power transmitting means capable of transmitting a~~ link mechanism that transmits
drive power to the movable means;

a ~~member accommodating means~~ cylindrical frame that is connected to the movable
means and contains a hollow portion accommodating the ~~drive power transmitting means~~ link
mechanism; and

an air-tight ~~member~~ link guide portion provided in the hollow portion of the cylindrical
frame that holds and guides the link mechanism as the link mechanism moves to transmit the
drive power to the movable means.

2. (Original): The bending action member according to claim 1 wherein the air-tight
member makes a sliding contact with the drive power transmitting means when the drive power
is transmitted to the movable means by the drive power transmitting means.

3. (Currently Amended): The bending action member according to claim 1, wherein the
movable means ~~is constituted of~~ comprises a plurality of articulation portions and adjoining two
articulation portions of the plurality of the articulation portions are so constructed that ~~[[the]]~~ an

articulation portion on ~~[[the]]~~ a rear end side starts its bending action after ~~[[the]]~~ a bending of ~~[[the]]~~ an articulation portion on ~~[[the]]~~ a front end side ends.

4. (Currently Amended): The bending action member according to claim 1 wherein a pair of forceps members constructed such that at least one of them is rotatable is provided at ~~[[the]]~~ a front end of the movable means, and

the pair of the forceps members is capable of gripping a solid object corresponding to a drive power transmitted by the drive power transmitting means.

5. (Currently Amended): A manipulator comprising:
a movable means in which ~~[[the]]~~ a front end side portion thereof is bendable;
~~a drive power generating means capable of generating a~~ motor that generates drive power for operating the movable means;

~~a drive power transmitting means capable of transmitting a~~ link mechanism that transmits drive power generated by the ~~drive power generating means~~ motor to the movable means;

~~a member accommodating means~~ cylindrical frame that is connected to the movable means and contains a hollow portion accommodating the ~~drive power transmitting means~~ link mechanism; and

~~an air-tight member~~ link guide portion provided in the hollow portion ~~of the cylindrical frame that holds and guides the link mechanism as the link mechanism moves to transmit the~~ drive power to the movable means.

6. (Original): The manipulator according to claim 5 wherein the air-tight member makes a sliding contact with the drive power transmitting means when the drive power is transmitted to the movable means by the drive power transmitting means.

7. (Currently Amended): The manipulator according to claim 5₁ wherein the movable means is constituted of a plurality of articulation portions and adjoining two articulation portions of the plurality of the articulation portions are so constructed that [[the]] an articulation portion on [[the]] a rear end side does not start its bending action until [[the]] a bending of [[the]] an articulation portion on [[the]] a front end side ends.

8. (Currently Amended): The manipulator according to claim 5₁ wherein a pair of forceps members constructed such that at least one of them is rotatable is provided at the front end side of the movable means₁ and

the pair of the forceps members grips a solid object by transmitting a drive power generated by the drive power generating means with the drive power transmitting means.

9. (Currently Amended): A multi-slider linkage mechanism₁ ~~further~~ comprising:
a movable means having a plurality of ~~articulations~~ articulation portions and constructed to be bendable,

wherein the plurality of articulation portions include a first articulation portion on [[the]] a front end side and [[the]] a second articulation portion on [[the]] a rear end side that are

constructed to be bendable to the same side and adjoin each other ~~of the plurality of the articulation portions~~, and the first articulation portion and the second articulation portion are so constructed that ~~[[the]] a bending action at the second articulation portion starts after [[the]] a bending action at the first articulation portion ends~~, and

[[the]] a magnitude of a moment required for starting the bending action of the second articulation portion is larger than a moment required for the bending action of the first articulation portion.

10. (Currently Amended): The multi-slider linkage mechanism according to claim 9, wherein

the second articulation portion has a rotary shaft perpendicular to the bending direction of the bending action,

and a first frame member and a second frame member having a common rotary shaft and constituting the second articulation portion are so constructed that

the first frame member has a first coupling portion;

the second frame member has a second ~~joint~~ coupling portion;

the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion are jointed with the rotary shaft used in common; and

a force generated in ~~[[the]] a~~ direction along the rotary shaft is increased between the first coupling portion and the second coupling portion accompanied by the bending action of the second articulation portion.

11. (Currently Amended): The multi-slider linkage mechanism according to claim 10 wherein [[the]] a contact face of the first coupling portion with the second coupling portion and [[the]] a contact face of the second coupling portion with the first coupling portion are tapered forward so that the respective contact faces follow each other when it is not bent.

12. (Currently Amended): A bending action member, comprising:

a movable means having a plurality of articulation portions at its front end side portion and constructed to be bendable; and

a drive power transmitting means constructed to be capable of transmitting the drive power to the movable means,

wherein [[the]] a first articulation portion on the front end side and [[the]] a second articulation portion on [[the]] a rear end side that are constructed to be bendable to the same side and adjoin each other of the plurality of the articulation portions are so constructed that [[the]] a bending action at the second articulation portion starts after [[the]] a bending action at the first articulation portion ends, and

[[the]] a magnitude of a moment required for starting the bending action of the second articulation portion is larger than a moment required for the bending action of the first articulation portion.

13. (Currently Amended): A manipulator comprising:

a movable means having a plurality of articulation portions at its front end portion and

constructed to be bendable;

a drive power generating means constructed to be capable of generating a drive power for operating the movable means; and

a drive power transmitting means constructed to be capable of transmitting the drive power generated by the drive power generating means to the movable means,

wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a first articulation portion on the front end side and ~~[[the]]~~ a second articulation portion on ~~[[the]]~~ a rear end side that are constructed to be bendable to the same side and adjoin each other of the plurality of the articulation portions are so constructed that ~~[[the]]~~ a bending action at the second articulation portion starts after ~~[[the]]~~ a bending action at the first articulation portion ends, and

~~[[the]]~~ a magnitude of a moment required for starting the bending action of the second articulation portion is larger than a moment required for the bending action of the first articulation portion.

14. (Currently Amended): The manipulator according to claim 13, wherein

a pair of forceps members constructed such that at least one of them is rotatable is provided at the front end portion of the movable means, and

the pair of the forceps members is capable of gripping a solid object by transmitting a drive power generated by the drive power generating means with the drive power transmitting means.

15. (Currently Amended): A bending action member, comprising:
a movable means constructed such that its front end side portion is bendable; ~~and~~
a drive power transmitting means constructed of at least one link member capable of transmitting a drive power to the movable means~~[[,]]; and~~
~~wherein a first joint portion is constructed of an end on an opposite side to the front end side of the~~ connected to at an end of the at least one link member, and
~~wherein the first joint portion is constructed to be connectable with~~ includes a projection that can be releasably connected to a drive power generating means for generating the drive power, and the drive power transmitting means is so constructed to ~~be capable of transmitting~~ transmit the drive power from the drive power generating means to the movable means when the first joint portion is connected to the drive power generating means and to not transmit the drive power from the drive power generating means to the movable means when the connection between the first joint portion and the drive power generating means is released.

16. (Currently Amended): The bending action member according to claim 15, wherein the movable means has a plurality of ~~articulations~~ articulation portions, and
[[the]] a first articulation portion on the front end side and [[the]] a second articulation portion on [[the]] a rear end side that are constructed to be bendable to the same side and adjoin each other of the plurality of the articulation portions are so constructed that [[the]] a bending action at the second articulation portion starts after [[the]] a bending action at the first articulation portion ends.

17. (Currently Amended): The bending action member according to claim 15, wherein the first joint portion has a projecting portion, and the projecting portion is capable of being fitted to a fitting hole made in a second joint portion composed of an elastic body that has the fitting hole and urges substantially perpendicularly to ~~[[the]]~~ a transmitting direction of the drive power.

18. (Currently Amended): An actuator constructed to be capable of engaging/disengaging a bending action member provided with a movable means at its front end side portion ~~and having a first joint portion, and~~ comprising:

a drive power generating means capable of generating a drive power for operating the movable means~~[[,]]~~;

a first joint portion connected to a link member that transmits the drive power to the movable means, the first joint portion having a projecting portion;

~~wherein a second joint portion connected to the drive power generating means, having a~~ the second joint portion containing including an elastic body for urging having a fitting hole, and the elastic body can be elastically urged in a direction substantially perpendicularly perpendicular to ~~[[the]]~~ a transmitting direction of the drive power ~~and having a fitting hole, and~~

wherein the second joint portion is connectable with connected to the drive power generating means in such a manner that the second joint portion is initially advanced substantially linearly by the drive power of the drive power generating means without the projecting portion being fitted into the fitting hole, and the projecting portion is arranged such

~~that the second joint portion is connected to~~ the first joint portion by advancing ~~the second joint portion~~ substantially linearly ~~along the direction of the drive power and fitting until the projecting portion is fitted into the fitting hole to a projecting portion~~ while applying an urging force ~~is applied to the first joint portion~~ by the elastic body ~~to the first joint portion having the projecting portion capable of being fitted to the fitting hole.~~

19. (Currently Amended): A manipulator comprising:

a bending action member including a movable means constructed such that its front end side portion is bendable and a drive power transmitting means capable of transmitting a drive power applied from outside to the movable means; and

an actuator having a drive power generating means capable of generating a drive power for operating the movable means,

wherein the bending action member and the actuator are constructed to be capable of engaging/disengaging each other[;],

[[the]] a first joint portion provided on the drive power transmitting means and [[the]] a second joint portion provided on the drive power generating means are provided to be connectable and separable[;],

[[the]] a coupling between the first joint portion and the second joint portion is executed after the bending action member and the actuator are jointed together[;], and

the first joint portion and the second joint portion are separated accompanied by the separating action of the bending action member and the actuator.

20. (Currently Amended): The manipulator according to claim 19, wherein

the second joint portion has an elastic body containing a fitting hole and configured for urging substantially perpendicularly to the transmitting direction of the drive power;

the first joint portion includes a projecting portion capable of being fitted to the fitting hole; and

the second joint portion is advanced substantially linearly along the transmitting direction of the drive power by the drive power generating means and fitted to the ~~fitting hole~~ projection portion while generating the urging force to the projecting portion, so that the first joint portion and the second joint portion are coupled to connect the drive power transmitting means with the drive power generating means.